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ORATION

IN HONOR OF

UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION

IN THE

BRITISH EMPIRE,

DELIVERED AT SOUTH READING,

AUGUST FIRST, 1834.

BY DAVID L. CHILD.

'Look here upon this picture and on this.'—SHAKSPEARE.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY GARRISON AND KNAPP.
NO. 31, CORNHILL.

1834.

(2624)
Estate of S. E. Sewall
Apr. 29, 1791
Dup. in pph. v.

ORATION.

NEXT to doing good and great actions ourselves, the best thing is to appreciate them duly when done by others. A frank commendation of goodness affords a strong presumption of a wish to imitate it. We participate the glory which we celebrate. On the other hand, self-praise is real reproach, and a man's true worth will commonly be found to be inversely as his own vauntings. No merit is so great that vanity cannot debase it, and none so little that humility may not exalt it. Our assembling together at this time, if we are actuated by the spirit which the occasion supposes and demands, cannot fail to be profitable in every view. It is an occasion of self-examination, not of self-applause; of commemorating a great civil achievement of another nation, not the military or political glory of our own; of serious and humble preparation for following, not of self-complacent pride for setting, a noble example.

The act of the British Parliament, and we may add in this case with peculiar emphasis, of the British nation, passed on the 28th day of August, 1833, to take effect ON THIS FIRST DAY of August, 1834, enfranchises 800,000 West India slaves, and confers for the first time the full fruition of civil rights upon 100,000 West India freemen. It is an event sublime in its nature, comprehensive and mighty in its immediate influence and remote consequences, precious beyond expression to the cause of freedom, and encouraging beyond any measure of any government on earth to the hearts of all enlightened and just men. Angels have more joy for this than for the lost, found.

They hold celestial jubilee for the stolen, restored, for him who stole, but shall steal no more, for the sons of God, their brethren 'which were dead, and are now alive again.'

This act was the consummation of a long course of beneficent and truly christian legislation. It forms the key-stone of a triumphal arch, such as earth-born ambition never conceived, reaching, like the patriarch's ladder, from earth to heaven; beautiful as the rainbow, enduring as the firmament, inscribed in characters of effulgence, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.'

In tracing the history of this subject in England, the first act which attracts attention is the emancipation of our own ancestors. For this we owe a debt of gratitude to the free spirit of England, which neither distance of time, nor subsequent unkindness, should make us ever forget. The people of our parent country were reduced to servitude by the Norman invaders. They became serfs, technically called *villeins;* and the abjectness of the social condition, which the word then denoted, may be judged of by the moral degradation which it now implies. The English serfs could not contract marriage without the consent of the noblemen to whom they belonged. They could not be witnesses. They could not hold property. They could not go from town to town without a pass from their owner. Some of them might be sold and carried off; all might be sold with the estates to which they were attached; and they might be murdered with impunity, or no other punishment than a slight fine. They were subject to other degrading disabilities and to cruel legal penalties, from which their lords were exempt, and for actions, which, if committed by a lord with a more enlightened conscience were not deemed worthy of any punishment at all!

There are probably few of us here, who are not descended from some of those, whose condition was such as I have described. They formed the body of the English nation. Their lords paramount and proprietors, were military and foreign adventurers, who were rewarded for elevating their chief to the throne of England, by parcelling out among them the property and persons of the people of England. This violent and disgraceful state of things continued without essential mitigation,

(except what was operated by the principle of law, that the offspring follows the condition of the *father*,) just about as long as the enslavement of colored men has continued since.* But it could not withstand the light which burst from the new-born press and from the Reformation. The consciences of masters were smitten by that light, with a force and efficacy, which belong not to mortal weapons. Four centuries after the Conquest, the English feudal lords began one after another to emancipate on their respective estates, and to receive rent from free-men, instead of personal service from slaves. History has not informed us of the troubles, which resulted from this measure. The last act of enfranchisement was executed by Elizabeth, in 1574, in favor of the serfs on the crown domains. All Englishmen were therefore free from villeinage, before the emigration of any of the first settlers of New-England. If this had not been the case, the most of them would not have been permitted to emigrate. The laboring and effective portion would not have had either liberty or property to enable them to come hither. It would defy human sagacity to say whether this fair land would not at this moment have been a howling wilderness, or peopled by some strange nation, if it had not been for the timely abolition of slavery in England.

By one of those amazing inconsistencies, of which the guilt and shame belong not exclusively to that country, or to a comparatively dark age, the African slave trade was permitted to commence, so far as England was concerned, by the same sovereign, who had completed emancipation at home. English vessels were licensed to undertake that detestable traffic, by the Protestant queen, whom I have just named. It is recorded of her that she made on that occasion a declaration, which would be altogether incredible, if we were not accustomed to hear things equally preposterous and contradictory. She said she 'was concerned lest any of the Africans should be carried off, without their *free consent*; that such a thing would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of heaven.' It may serve to account in some measure for this fatal aberration, that neither European governments nor people at that period, concerned

* It is a cheering coincidence, that the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt was limited to the same period.

themselves much about what was done in the distant and unknown regions of America. Individual adventurers, actuated by love of gain, and regardless of the means by which they gratified it, gave a loose to the worst passions of our nature, far from all cognizance of human laws. America was regarded and used for a century after this epoch, as New Holland is now, except that convicts transported to Virginia were sold for slaves, thus unfortunately giving a taste of flesh. Even as late as the latter part of the last century, learned Europeans maintained the theory of the essential inferiority, both moral and physical, of every thing American. The animals were smaller ; and the facial angle degenerated more from the Grecian standard, and approached nearer to the baboon and the dog, than in Europe. The assertion, that colored men are naturally inferior, was never made with more assurance, nor by men of more philosophical renown, than the assertion that all animal productions of America are inferior to their species in other parts of the globe. This theory has been applied within the recollection of most of us to the productions of American genius, which have been pretty extensively pronounced to be so many new proofs of the correctness of Buffon's idea of American degeneracy, and of an innate inferiority. The feelings of contempt, and indifference, may account in part for the carelessness and inconsistency of the government of Elizabeth, in permitting British subjects to enter upon that unhallowed career, in which it is difficult to say which predominates, the thirst of gold or the thirst of blood.

But we need not occupy ourselves with curious conjectures as to the causes and motives which led to *kidnapping*, a term and a trade peculiar to the moderns, and unknown to the ancients, whose slaves were prisoners taken in national wars, and were preserved as slaves, in mitigation of the law of nations, as then established, by which prisoners of war were to be put to death. We have no need to go more nicely to work to account for slavery than for other great crimes,—for robbing one man of his liberty than another of his purse, his life, or his means of living. There have been too many in all ages, who were willing to gain support, wealth and power for themselves, by sacrificing the rights, the happiness and the lives of

others. Those are objects, which the selfish and unsubdued passions of the human heart supremely covet. I have no doubt that there are thousands at this time, both in England and America, who would delight to see slavery of every kind restored and perpetuated with increased rigor. Some persons imagine that they were born to command, and they look upon one, who would take away or diminish their power, with the animosity with which a tiger regards a competitor for the bodies of simple sheep.

The second act of English abolition was, a decision of the learned and upright judiciary of that country. James Somerset, an African slave, had been brought to England by his master, *Charles Stewart*, in 1769. Somerset left his master, who took an opportunity to seize and convey him on board a vessel, to be carried and sold in Jamaica. Granville Sharpe, who had studied the law three years with a single view to the investigation of the question,—'Whether in England man could be the property of man'?—determined that it should now be settled by the highest judicial authority. Somerset was brought up by a writ of habeas corpus; and we are told that the case was argued by the counsel for liberty, with an eloquence which was never exceeded. History is silent as to the eloquence of the opposite counsel. The opinion of all the judges was taken upon the pleadings, with this great result, that 'as soon as a slave sets foot on British ground, he is free.' This principle was the peculiar glory of England, until it was adopted, under the auspices of Bolivar, into the constitutions of the South American republics. It is mortifying to add, that with these exceptions and that of the republic of Hayti, the principle is as peculiar to England as it ever was. The strong and prophetic lines of Cowper, and the splendid oratory of Curran, have made this glorious pre-eminence known to millions, who do not consult the repositories of law:—

'Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble; and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all our empire, that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.'

During most of the period previous to this decision, the London newspapers were disfigured by advertisements of 'runaway slaves;' but never since has that scandal of a free state recurred in Great Britain.

The third epoch in the history of English abolition, is the establishment of the colony at Sierra Leone. During the American war, many hundred slaves escaped from their masters, chiefly in the southern department, and took refuge in the British camp. Twelve hundred of these were finally carried to Sierra Leone, and put in possession of freedom and the rights of British subjects. Seven hundred and seventy-four other American slaves, who had in like manner fled from 'friends' to enemies, were emancipated by the British, and placed in the island of Trinidad. These were the earliest experiments of creating free communities out of colored slaves. They have been completely successful, and without doubt have had a very considerable influence in bringing about that great and final consummation, which it is our happiness this day to celebrate. How wonderful and past our finding out are the ways of Providence! Those poor slaves, flying from the lash of republicans, who proclaimed all 'men free and equal,' and finding an asylum with men advertised to these 'runaways' as tyrants by the same republicans, have come to be the pioneers of freedom to millions of their brethren, whose wrongs and sufferings in one hour, surpass the sum of all that were ever felt or could have been apprehended through interminable ages by the American colonies from the mother country! Ours was only partial political subjection; theirs is complete personal prostration.

The fourth epoch is that of the abolition of the slave trade. This, like the abolition of villeinage, originated in individual and voluntary movements, and was effected by the operations of the press and of public opinion. To the venerable Thomas Clarkson, who is yet alive, the honor of accomplishing this event is due, more than to any other man. From the time that he graduated at Cambridge university, he made it the business of his active life. He it was, who first awakened the minds of Wilberforce, Pitt and Fox to the importance of this subject. He visited the slave-trading ports and vessels, and ferretted out, with infinite pains and at the peril of his life, the appalling

facts, which astonished and dismayed the British nation. He consulted and labored with Lafayette, Gregoire, and other friends of the colored race in France, and furnished materials for the plastic mind and commanding eloquence of Mirabeau. For twenty years, amidst discouragement and opprobrium, he maintained the cause of justice and humanity against as great a concentration of bad passion and perverted ingenuity, as was ever found, except in pandemonium itself. But the question had not attained that maturity which prepared it for the labors of Clarkson, nor which prepared Clarkson for his labors, without a numerous and noble list of predecessors ;—Richard Baxter, Addison, Montesquieu, Godwin, Steele, Thomson, Shenstone, Postlethwaite, Sterne, Warburton, William Dilwyn, Dr. Hartley, Granville Sharpe, John Wesley, Whitefield, Adam Smith, Dr. Robertson, Abbe Raynal, Thomas Day, Bishop Porteus, Gilbert Wakefield, Necker, Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, and that society generally, both in England and America.* These are a few of the men, whom Clarkson has piously embalmed as the forerunners of the abolition of the slave-trade, and we may add, of slavery also, because the question of the slave-trade necessarily led to discussion on that of slavery itself. Every word of fact, argument, or indignation, uttered in England against the trade, was reverberated with startling echoes in all the crazy castles of colonial slavery.

It is gratifying to an American to add, that Mr. Clarkson has done full justice to a number of our countrymen, whose writings and labors had contributed to the same great result. The most considerable of these, next to the Society of Friends, were John Woolman, a native of New Jersey, Anthony Benezet, a native of France, settled in Philadelphia, Dr. Rush, Dr. Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Clarkson judged Jefferson by his writings, not by his practice. Let us cherish the hope that the memorable declaration of that influential person, in respect to the corrupt tendencies, the blighting effects, and impending judgments of slavery, may do more good than his example did

* No person can have become an intelligent abolitionist without learning to reverence the conscientious and disinterested conduct of the Friends. It is painful to be told that a large majority of those early and thorough-going abolitionists, and particularly that portion denominated orthodox, are now among the greatest sticklers for the pretensions of *caste*.

evil, and more even than the Declaration of Independence itself. The cause is worthier than that of colonial independence, inasmuch as political is less bad than personal oppression ; and inasmuch also, as oppression of any sort, exercised by boastful republicans, is more execrable than open despotism.

It would be interesting to pursue the Protean advocates of the slave-trade through all the forms of sophistry and menace, which they successively assumed ; and it would be still more interesting to detail the sterling logic, and the overwhelming appeals to the better feelings of man, with which those advocates were constantly met and routed. Let it suffice to say, that at one time the justification of the trade was placed on the ground of a punishment of the first murderer, and his descendants. When I meet a man, who quotes Scripture to support slavery, I feel that

'Something wicked this way comes.'

I feel as if he would not apply to that volume for any other purpose.

When it was answered that the posterity of Cain were all drowned in the deluge, the slavites took ground this side of the flood. They said that the curse pronounced upon *Canaan*, was still clinging to the poor Ethiopians, his descendants. In answer to this it was shown, that Canaan was the only son of Ham, who did *not* settle in Africa ; that all the others did settle there ; that in the original Hebrew, the term which we translate Ethiopian, is literally, 'descendant of Cush.' And that the passage in Jeremiah, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?' reads in the original, 'Can the descendant of Cush change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?'

Then it was said that the Africans *loved* to be kidnapped ; that the trip to the West Indies, compared with their condition at home, was what the Irish would term, 'going a pleasuring;' that 'the middle passage' was the happiest portion of a negro's life ; and that while it continued, he sung and danced for joy. As to these statements of fact, it was shown how the slaves were packed between decks, like pork for the market, with an allowance of room a good deal smaller than a grave ; that they were fed on a putrid yam and a pint of water per day ; that from fail-

ure of water or provisions on protracted passages, whole cargoes had perished; that it was common to throw the sick overboard; that nearly every time the wretches were turned out to take an airing, some, and especially little children, would be found dead between the decks; that nearly half of the whole, perished in the transportation from Africa to America, or in the seasoning to a new climate; that the slave-traders made it a point to set sail in the night, in order that their tender hearts might not be pierced by the cries and shrieks of the slaves, as their native land receded forever from their view; that the dancing which was the evidence of such joy, was a woful jumping up and down in chains, under the operation of the whip to keep them in health by exercise; that if suffered to be on deck unchained, they leaped overboard to end their miseries; that they would often starve themselves to death by shutting the teeth and nobly refusing sustenance, if their mouths were not forced open by a powerful steel instrument, like that which surgeons use in cases of lock-jaw; and that the merry songs and glees were known to those who understood the language to be mournful dirges, in which they bewailed the loss of country, kindred and home. One of the witnesses, a mate of a slave vessel, when cross-examined before a committee of Parliament, as to the cause and manner of this strange merry-making, stated, that when the weather was smooth, the slaves were taken out every day to dance; that a long and heavy chain was passed all around the deck near the railing; that a row of slaves was placed on each side of this chain; that hand-cuffs which confined the right hand of one to the left of another, were made fast to the long chain, so that they stood in couples, all fastened to the great chain; and that thus arrayed, their *dancing* commenced to the music of the whip. 'I,' said the mate, 'used to dance the men, and the captain used to dance the women.' It was also testified that a certain slave captain ordered a woman to be whipped to stop her singing, because her plaintive notes, though he was ignorant of her language, 'hurt his feelings so.' As to the shocking and impious pretence of stealing and chaining men to make them happy, Bishop Warburton indignantly asked,—'But who are you, who pretend to judge of another man's happiness, that state, which each man under the guidance of his Maker,

forms for himself, and not one man for another? To know what constitutes mine or your happiness, is the sole prerogative of Him who created us, and cast us in so various and different moulds. Did your slaves ever complain to you of their unhappiness in their native land; or, rather let me ask, do they ever cease complaining of their condition under their lordly masters, where they see indeed the accommodations of civil life, but see them all pass to others, themselves unbenefitted by them?

Be so gracious then, ye petty tyrants! to let your slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes their happiness, and then see whether they do not place it in their native country, rather than in the contemplation of your grandeur, of which their misery makes so large a part,—a country so passionately longed for, that despairing of happiness, (that is, of escaping the chains of their cruel task-masters,) they console themselves with feigning it to be the gracious reward of heaven in their future state!!' Edmund Burke struck at the whole platform of this pretended happiness, and demolished it by one thunderbolt: 'If,' said he, 'you *have* made a happy slave, you have made a degraded man,' and subverted the soul of an immortal being.

Next, the slavites addressed themselves to the national cupidity, and uttered melancholy forebodings of the ruin and decay, which would be brought upon the West Indies, and upon the commerce and the other essential interests of the country. 'The fisheries,' said a well-fed London alderman, 'the fisheries in particular, will be prodigiously injured by abolishing this valuable trade. Vast quantities of inferior and damaged fish find vent in the consumption of the slaves. Now, Sir, if we abolish the slave-trade, where shall we find another market for this fish?'

To such paltry and infamous arguments, which, except in the foul atmosphere of prejudice, could not have lived long enough to be annihilated, the abolitionists were obliged to oppose the great and acknowledged principles of justice, humanity, common honesty, and the known will of God. On all occasions when other pretences for opposition to the measure failed, the slavites rushed into the mists of declamation, and expatiated upon the comprehensive horrors of general throat-cutting. It is a fact, that

the same alarm for the safety of planters and their families, was raised against the abolition of the slave-trade, as is now raised against the abolition of slavery itself. The reason of this is, that the most intelligent slave-trading, slave-holding and slave-breeding gentlemen plainly perceive, that if the rational faculties and better feelings of the community be once called into exercise upon this subject, it will be all over with slavery. Hence their uniform policy of forbidding and putting down discussion in Congress, by a slap on the mouth as soon as it begins to open, or by drowning the voice of justice and mercy with clamor and menace, like Richard, lest 'the heavens should hear these tell-tale women.' For the sake of the selfish pleasure, baleful indulgences and petty tyranny of the plantation, and for the more manly and respectable tyranny, which slavery enables them to exert over the affairs of the whole Union, prejudices, originating in times of ignorance and lawlessness, must not be stirred, but remain stagnating, tainting the air, and destroying health, happiness, and the life of the soul!

On the second day of April, 1792, the House of Commons adopted a resolution, moved by Wilberforce, sustained by Fox, Whitbread and Pitt, and resisted by Dundas, Col. Tarlton and others, 'that the slave-trade ought to be abolished.' The aristocratic branch rejected it, as they usually do, as long as they can, every measure of reform—every measure which is designed to take from power, and give to the oppressed.

An amelioration act was however passed, prescribing under severe penalties the ship-room, which should be allowed to slaves in the voyage to America. A bill abolishing the trade, was passed by the Commons in 1794, and thrown out by the Lords. At length, on the 25th of March, in the year 1807, the slave-trade total abolition bill became a law. It is necessary, however, to remark, that this result was chiefly valuable for its moral influence. No sensible diminution of the African trade resulted from it. About 100,000 men had been annually stolen, and exported from Africa to America, previously to the passage of the act, and about the same number have been exported annually ever since. This has induced the British government to pass an act constituting slave-trading piracy, and subjecting it to the penalty of death; and they have also, from time to time,

negotiated with other nations to induce them to adopt the same principle, and grant a mutual right to search vessels suspected to be concerned in the trade. France, Holland, Sweden, Russia, Denmark and Spain have acceded to the proposal of Great Britain. The South American Republics, and also the empire of Brazil, have in form at least concurred. Our own government declines. A bill, establishing a mutual right of search for this object has been negatived more than once by the House of Representatives of this great republic. This result has been effected by artfully playing upon a northern prejudice against the *phrase*,—'right of search.' It is an humiliating fact, but we are accustomed to such facts.

Still the African slave-trade goes on, and with some new horrors, which have grown out of the very attempts to suppress it. There have been repeated instances of whole cargoes of human beings thrown overboard, in the hope of concealing the character of the vessel. The slave-trade will never cease, so long as slavery exists. Those who patronize kidnappers by purchasing, are in reality the most guilty. They are the *principals*, the kidnappers are mere *agents* and *attornies*. The increased danger of the trade enhances the profits, and it is now estimated that if the trader can land safely one third of his cargo, he can afford to sacrifice the other two thirds ! ! Where there is a market, there will be merchandize ; where there is a demand, there will be a supply ; where there are carcases, there will be vultures. You may as well turn the rivers back to their fountains, as to change this law.

Suppose the county of Middlesex were obnoxious from some cause to the inhabitants of Boston ; and it should be the policy of that city to send out assassins and highwaymen, to rob and murder the inhabitants and fire their dwellings. Then if the people of Middlesex should place a guard at Warren Bridge, leaving half a dozen other bridges and avenues, besides rivers and bays wide open ; their proceedings would be about as efficacious as the attempt to destroy the slave-trade, while slavery itself subsists. Let the infernal incitements to assassins cease, and the murder and rapine will cease without guarding the passes. Wilberforce lamented in one of his latest public addresses that error, which led the early abolitionists to strike

at a limb, when they should have endeavored to reach the vital parts of the trade, which are the slave markets of America, not the slave factories of Africa. The practical inefficacy of the act takes, however, nothing from the merit of its motive. In affairs of such magnitude and complexity, it is no impeachment of human foresight that results do not always correspond with calculations. Nothing but repeated experiments can put imperfect beings in a sure path.

The fifth act of English abolition related to the internal slave-trade between the different British colonies, and between those colonies and other countries. This trade by an act of Parliament passed in 1824, was put upon the same footing as the foreign ; and this act was attended with complete success. The trade ceased immediately and totally. It being a domestic concern, and one in which the custom house officers, ordinary magistrates and military force could act, the government was enabled to control the whole matter, and to suppress the market while they stopped the supply.

The sixth abolition act of England, was in 1828, by which the Hottentot slaves in the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, to the number of 30,000, were emancipated and raised to an entire equality of rights and privileges with the white inhabitants. These were a peculiarly degraded class of slaves. They and their ancestors, for a hundred and fifty years had been enslaved by the sordid and cruel Dutch colonists. Perhaps no human beings were ever so assimilated to brutes. They had passed into a proverb for stupidity and barbarism. The customary clamor was raised against this measure. The usual predictions of thefts, murders, robberies and burnings were reiterated. But the government proceeded steadily in its purpose. And how unfortunate has been the result ! Those unhappy colonists have not been able to discern a single speck of insurrection ! No plantations have been ravaged, no houses rifled, no babes spitted on pikes, no mothers consumed in their dwellings, no masters' throats cut. As for thieving, it is an acknowledged fact, that though extensive before, it nearly ceased after emancipation. All slaves will secretly appropriate something to themselves from what they alone toil to produce. In many cases, they must do it to avoid fainting in the field from the scantiness and badness of their food. This the masters call stealing, and

usually punish in a sanguinary and often fatal manner. Yet they are very indignant when they are charged with stealing the bodies and wages, which they take without any excuse, either of necessity or desert. The Hottentots are now an orderly, industrious and improving community. They are eager to acquire knowledge; have good schools, numerous flocks, herds, horses and wheel carriages ; and they work better for *Master Cash*, than they did for *Master Lash*. There is no pretence that a single instance of any of the predicted horrors has ensued.

The seventh and last act of British abolition, is that which has consecrated this day as one of the brightest in the calendar. It is necessary to observe, that this was far from being satisfactory to the anti-slavery men of England. It embraced the conditions of apprenticeship and compensation. But I think that the friends of the colored race did right to accept it. The question was, whether the slaves should be rescued forthwith from torture and chains by a conditional emancipation, to become absolute in seven years, or whether the contest for perfect justice should be prolonged, and mean time the slaves left upon racks. I think abolitionists would have been inconsistent if they had held out obstinately at a further expense of tears and blood.

In equity and good conscience, compensation is more due to the slaves than to the masters. It is of right due to the injured party. The members of the Society of Friends in the United States, carrying out honestly in action the principles which they acknowledged in the abstract, paid the arrears of wages to their freed-men. Who has ever heard that they were impoverished by it, or suffered any drawback upon their prosperity ?

But admitting in its utmost latitude the principle of compensation, still I maintain, that money ought not in fact to be awarded unconditionally, because then it might turn out to be not a reimbursement for loss, but a bounty for crime. According to the statement of Washington, in his agricultural correspondence, the land in a free, will sell for *twice* as much as in a slave State. The enhanced value of the land, and the increased rents and profits from free labor will be compensation, and often more than compensation, for the supposed loss ; and therefore an absolute payment of money to all slave-owners, at a certain rate per head, without waiting for results or examining facts,

will be in many cases a premium for pre-eminent wrong. If, however, compensation should, on striking the balance, be thought justly due, nothing can be more manifest than that every part of a slaveholding and slave-trading republic ought to bear its proportion.

The conduct of the Antigua planters, while the bill was pending, will serve as a fair specimen of the sincerity of those awful forebodings and terrible alarms for the safety of the whites, which are regularly got up when any measure of justice is proposed in behalf of the colored race. Those planters performed their part in this old farce to admiration. They adjured parliament by the love of God, and the love of wives, children and home, and by the fear of massacre and universal pollution to stop in their wild career. Out of tenderness to those distressed persons, the seven years' apprenticeship was proposed with compensation at the end of that period. The most accomplished play-actor could not have changed his tone and manner more suddenly than the Antigua men. 'Poh,' said they, 'this apprenticeship is a silly business—all nonsense. If you must emancipate, do it to-morrow, and give us our money.' They forgot their wives, their children, and their own throats, except to exercise them in calling stoutly for the assassins to be let loose. It cannot be said they forgot their God, for, 'their god was gold, and their religion theft.' Since the passage of the bill, the legislature of Antigua have capped their consistency by passing an act to liberate their slaves without apprenticeship, on this auspicious day.

It would be very agreeable to my feelings to pay a suitable tribute to each individual, who has been long and nobly distinguished by labors and abilities directed to the final accomplishment of British abolition. But this is impracticable on the present occasion.

There is one individual, who by his talents, his gigantic exertions and his eminent station, achieved by personal worth, has exerted so great an influence, that I cannot forbear to name him. I am persuaded that the present Lord Chancellor of England, will be remembered by future generations as one of the greatest benefactors of Englishmen and of mankind, that God has ever lent to earth. As a writer, the author of an early work on the

Colonial Policy, as a contributor to the Edinburgh Review, as a lawyer and a member of Parliament, he has always raised his powerful voice, and wielded his powerful pen in behalf of the oppressed. In the public meetings of the Anti-Slavery Society, in his place in the House of Commons, and wherever else the voice of reason, justice and mercy could be heard, he has pleaded during twenty years, the cause of 'the suffering and the dumb.' His reward is not of this world. He has the fervent gratitude of the good and the free. He has the ardent hatred of the aristocratic and the evil. This is eulogium enough.

Long before emancipation was completed, there had been great ameliorations of the condition of the West India slaves. Slave protectors, or fiscals for the same purpose, were provided in all the colonies. These magistrates were armed with great authority, and were not allowed to be slaveholders. Careful provision had been made for punishing cruelty and murder; and to this end inquests on the view of dead bodies of slaves, come to their death by sudden or violent means, were strictly enforced.

Masters were prohibited from whipping women at all, or whipping men more than fifteen lashes; and of that they were obliged to make a record, and to do all in the presence of witnesses. Slaves were made competent witnesses, in all cases in the same manner as whites. Slaves were authorized to acquire and possess property to an unlimited extent. Masters were compelled to emancipate whenever a slave could offer his value as fixed by appraisers, chosen one by himself, one by the master, and one by the magistrate. The carrying of a whip, cowskin, or any thing of the kind, either as an instrument of punishment, or a symbol of authority, was totally prohibited. The quantity and quality of food, clothing and bedding were strictly prescribed. Schools were established for the slaves. Working on Sundays was prohibited, and liberty to attend public worship secured. Marriages of slaves were made sacred and inviolable, and separation of families forbidden. The slaves were allowed to have half of a working day in each week to themselves. These are some of the improvements, which had been effected in the condition of British slaves, for many years before the late measure.

And shall we not join in devout thanksgiving to God, and in gratulation to that noble people, which was found worthy to be the dispenser of so much justice and mercy? Be honor and gratitude given to the thousands of British Anti-Slavery Societies, their faithful agents, able writers and eloquent orators; to the nine hundred thousand good men and glorious women, who petitioned, and prayed, and wrought, and gave of their earnings to redress the wrongs, and to pour consolation into the hearts of the oppressed and despised of the earth.

While Britain has been practising the 'righteousness which exalteth a nation,' what have we done to put away the 'sin, which is a reproach to any people?' we who have superadded to the universal obligations of justice, as public and solemn an engagement as mortals can contract, that all men within this republic shall be 'free.' Monarchists, whom we sometimes indulge ourselves in denouncing as despots and slaves, have done for liberty without a pledge, what we have refused to do with one, the most binding; or if it be not so, virtue and honor are names to cheat the unwary, and our professions false dice. In the face of Heaven and of men, 'we pledged our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor,' to support certain principles upon which alone we justified resistance and asked the divine blessing? Those principles were 'That all men are born free and equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness;' that 'these truths are self-evident,' that is, as clear to the mental, as the light of heaven to the natural eye; and that all men, when the government under which they live fails to secure to them these, have a right 'to throw it off.' These were no new truths. They existed from the foundation of the world, and they were always known and believed by all men having liberty to learn and believe. Our covenant implies thus much, for it declares that these principles are set forth to show 'a decent respect for the opinions of *mankind*.' It would seem from our subsequent practice that they were set forth for no other purpose! Mankind were swindled of their sympathy and assistance.

Our nation erected on these principles, unjustly if they are false, is the most unjust of all nations if they are true.

The guilt of doing wrong is always in proportion to the knowledge of what is right. We boast of superior knowledge, are we aware that in the same breath we boast of superior guilt? We have withheld and we continue to withhold from a large portion of the people, those rights which we professed to ask and to receive for the whole. A Russian or oriental despot might have some apology for such conduct. He denies that liberty and a free pursuit of happiness are blessings to the people, because he says that they are incapable of enjoying without abusing them. But for us there is no excuse. We not only acknowledge, but we loudly proclaim to the world that liberty and education are blessings, to which every man has by the gift of God, a right to aspire and attain; and yet we tyrannously combine to forbid these blessings to millions of our innocent countrymen. This is adding hypocrisy to crime. We are obnoxious to the fatal reproof of the apostle to Ananias:—'Why hath Satan put it in thy heart to keep back a part of the price of the land? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God!'

There are in the midst of this republic a number of men, larger than the entire population in 1776, who are doomed by us to chains and slavery,—slavery, compared with which the grievances of which we complained were frivolous.

The braggers of American liberty are the lords of millions of slaves! The assertors of the inalienable rights of man respect no right but that of the strongest. The metropolis of freedom is a foul prison-house of innocent men, women and children—a vile shamble for their sale. The small red ensign of the auctioneer of their flesh, floats under the protection of the starry banner. The clank of their chains mingles with congressional harangues in praise of liberty, and of 'the heaven-born band,' who shed the blood of *their* masters to obtain it!

I gladly turn from such humiliating inconsistencies. Let deep darkness overshadow and hide them from sight. It is fearful to contemplate such mockery. Let slaveholding republicans give their vocabulary its customary airing;—let them make periodical apostrophes to liberty, or pathetic complaints of the violation of equal rights in the partial distribution of loaves and

fishes ;—mean while let the manacled mother, weeping for her children, take up her march to the markets of the far south-west !

What have *we* done during sixty years, to ameliorate the condition of wronged and wretched men ? We have multiplied oppressions and increased their weight.

Formerly there were laws in the slave states imposing a *fine*, for the wilful murder of a slave. Those laws were sometimes executed and amounted to some restraint. Now they are repealed and replaced by laws imposing nominally the penalty of death ; but they are never executed, and are no restraint at all ! The fault is, not merely in the judges and juries, but in the legislatures, who obviously intended from the beginning that those laws should be ineffective. Never was there seen more detestable instances of hypocricy, that vice which gilds over, and gives currency to all other vices, than can be found in the pages of planters' legislation. Language is there used, according to the rule of old Talleyrand, to conceal thoughts. There an unwearied study, and most perverse ingenuity are directed to the reconciling of ' decent' appearances with diabolical realities. These terms are strong, but hearken to the evidence.

North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia have similar provi sions on the subject of the murder of slaves. The preamble of the leading act, that of North Carolina, declares that ' a distinction of criminality between the murder of a white person and one, who is equally a human creature, but merely of a different complexion, is disgraceful to humanity, and degrading in the highest degree to the laws and principles of a free christian and enlightened country.' The act then proceeds to provide ' that the wilful and deliberate murder of a slave, shall be punished with death.' So much for ' decent' appearances ; and now mark the dreadful reality ;—' Provided, however, that this act shall not extend to any slave dying under moderate correction !'— Dying under moderate correction ! If there be any degree of malice more savage than that which kills by lingering torments, then this law may be a restraint upon such malice ; but to call it protection, is the most impious mockery that ever insulted

heaven. Shrouded in the cowl of a monk, it points out the way to murder.

> 'Of all the reprobate
> None seemed maturer for the flames of hell.
> He was a hypocrite.'

In South Carolina, the same object is effected with equal safety and equal sincerity. The preamble is equally pious, just and magnanimous. It abounds in 'noble sentiments:' 'Whereas cruelty is not only highly unbecoming those, who profess themselves Christians, but odious in the eyes of all men who have any sense of virtue or humanity;' and, 'as the slaves are under the government, so they ought to be under the protection of masters and managers of plantations;' 'and because many cruelties may be committed on slaves when no *white* person may be present to give evidence of the same;' therefore it is enacted 'that if any slave shall suffer in his life or limb, or other member, the owner or other person having the care and government of him shall be taken and deemed to be guilty of such maiming or murder, unless he shall by his own oath clear and exculpate himself;' which oath 'every court is empowered to administer and to acquit the offender accordingly.' A perfect rail-road to an acquittal! or, if it be not perfect, it is to be presumed that the legislators of Carolina will make it so as soon as they shall discover wherein it is deficient.

There is one other touch of hypocrisy in this same act, too curious in its kind to pass unnoticed. It is that this oath shall be allowed, even if a white person were present at the murder, if such white person 'shall neglect or refuse to give evidence, or to be examined on oath;' thus inviting and instigating a citizen, commanded by the state to appear and testify in court, to stay away in contempt of the court, or to stand mute in like contempt!

My friends, perhaps you do not believe these monstrous stories; I cannot blame you if you do not. In truth, they are incredible, yet I have quoted the words of the statutes. It is a principle of common law, that no man shall be permitted to stultify himself. If this principle were applicable to states, these laws would be null and void; they are self-stultifying; their action is in direct conflict with their reason.

The highest tribunal of Carolina, in applying the statute, has declared that by the above provision it is rendered nugatory. It is, however, effectual for one purpose. It stamps upon the bold brow of tyranny the mean mark of hypocrisy.

The law of Virginia is contrived with more subtlety, but to the same end, practically screening from any punishment, men, whom 'a decent respect for the opinions of mankind,' makes it necessary to denounce as worthy of the highest. The law in Virginia is, that an examination and acquittal by *justices of the peace*, shall be a bar to any other prosecution, and shall oust the grand jury of its jurisdiction, in cases of murder. The grand jury cannot indict after such acquittal, *nor* before such examination.

Now that this most strange and anomalous legal machinery was contrived on purpose to screen the murder of slaves, is apparent from this, that in other cases of crime, and of course inferior crime, the jurisdiction of justices of the peace is not final! If, therefore, a man rob a hen-roost in Virginia, he may be indicted by the grand jury, though acquitted by a thousand justices! But, if he rob one, whom we have the authority of North Carolina for calling 'equally a human creature with ourselves,' of the precious jewel of life, such acquittal can never be legally called in question, or revised by any human tribunal. It is consoling to reflect that there is one where it may be.

I do not refer to the laws of all the twelve slave states, because time would fail us. It is sufficient to say that in effect, they all screen crimes of the deepest die from any punishment. No instance was ever known in any of them of a white man being punished, capitally, for the murder of a slave, or of any colored person. This fact has been published to the world again and again, during the last ten years, and no man has ventured to contradict it. Every planter knows, and some acknowledge, that the murder of slaves by barbarous and inquisitorial tortures and starvation, or by sudden and mortal violence, is too common to excite remark. No man, who possesses a character for truth and values it, will venture to assert that the penalty which the southern laws decorously provide, was ever applied to a white for the murder of a slave, or of any colored

man. I will say further, that such is the demoralized state of feeling in the slaveholding communities of our republic, that they would not permit an impartial administration of the law in this respect, even if all the ingenious clogs, designed to prevent any operation at all, were removed.

A gentleman, who hears me, formerly resided in Washington, in the District of Columbia, and he states, that a clergyman declared a few years ago, that he had resided there as pastor of a church nineteen years ; that during that period, no year had passed without the murder of one or more slaves within the District ; that, during the same period, there had been but one execution, and that was of a colored man for *attempting* to commit a crime against a white.

Achilles Murat, late a citizen of the United States, and a slaveholder, is one of the freshest and honestest writers in defence of slavery, being an open derider of virtue. He frankly admits that 'there is in fact no law, to protect *American* slaves against ill treatment from their masters.'

In 1824, a Virginia jury propounded to the judges of the Court of Appeals, the highest court of law in the state, this question —'Can a master be indicted for beating his slave cruelly, inhumanly, and beyond the bounds of moderation ?' The court said that this was a very 'grave' and 'delicate' question, which they should not then decide. This question has never been decided judicially in any of the slave states ; nor has it been raised in any except Virginia. But who does not see that not to decide was deciding it ? The most solemn decision in favor of the master, could have conferred no power, which the steting of a decision did not leave with him. It left right with might, where it has always been, and gave a new sanction to the unholy union by refusing to disturb it. In the Declaration of Independence, withholding redress for wrong is charged as a crime upon the king, and he is declared to have 'abdicated government' by putting his subjects 'out of his protection.' If the government of Virginia have put half a million of subjects 'out of their protection,' it follows from their own reasoning,—that reasoning on which our whole system is founded,—that they have 'abdicated government.' And why should it be thought a wonderful or dreadful thing that their subjects, so much more oppressed than

they ever were, should have adopted their conclusion and imitated their example. I am not in favor of insurrection. I believe that slavery can be abolished without a resort to violence; but I see not how those, who applaud our forefathers of '75, can condemn the slaves—for rising. I will not belie my principles. I acknowledge that I regard the *black Poles* of America, with the same feelings as I do the white ones of Russia, and rank the Virginian Turner, in the same grade with the Scottish Wallace.

It is a duty to the cause which we are engaged in, to show the *practice*, under these laws.

On the tenth day of April last, a splendid private dwelling in the city of New Orleans, was discovered to be on fire. Firemen and citizens hastened to the scene. The flames spread with great rapidity. A rumor arose among the crowd, that there were slaves chained in the building. The proprietor, a lady, together with her husband, was standing near, attended by a number of friends. Those friends, out of delicacy to the principal party, were first applied to for information upon the subject by one of the criminal judges of the city, who happened to be present. This application was treated with indifference. Mean time the rumor gathered strength, and the judge ventured to accost in a polite manner the proprietor and her husband, and to ask for the keys of the apartments of their house. They replied in an insulting tone, 'that there *were* persons, who would do much better by remaining at home, than by *interfering* with their neighbors in the quality of officious friends.' By this time, anxiety and indignation had risen to a height which repudiated politeness. It is a sad proof of the habitual awe which slaveholding power imposes, that the people should have repressed their indignation so long. The doors were forced, and disclosed scenes of horror, to which the bloody chamber of Bluebeard had before given a fictitious existence. In the kitchen was found one aged woman, emaciated with hunger, lacerated with scourging, covered with the sores of old wounds, chained to the floor; and, to use the expression of the newspapers of New Orleans, 'half cooked,' for the fire had approached near her. In another apartment of the lower story were found two girls, one with a heavy iron collar, and both confined with

irons, and dreadfully bruised and wounded. From the garre four other wretches were unchained from painful postures, and borne through hotness and suffocation from the dens of the demon. Some of them had been imprisoned by her many months. Fed with a handful of meal, and scourged and beaten every morning, they were reduced almost to skeletons, and the bones of some protruded ; but their miserable existence was protracted by their tormentor, for the purpose of inflicting refined cruelties and gradual death. I do but quote the expressions of a New Orleans editor, in saying, that 'seven slaves, more or less horribly mutilated, were seen, some chained to the floor, and some suspended by the neck to the ceiling, with their limbs stretched and torn from one extremity to the other. Language is powerless and inadequate to give a proper conception of the horror, which a scene like this inspired ; we will not attempt it.' 'Their bodies,' says another paper of the same day and city, 'from head to foot, were covered with scars and sores, and filled with wounds.' 'One poor old man, upwards of sixty years of age, was chained hand and foot, and made fast to the floor, in a kneeling position. His head bore the appearance of having been beaten until it was broken, and the worms were actually seen making a feast of his brains ! !'

Forgive me that I inflict upon you this hideous rehearsal. That which is not too bad to be permitted, must not be thought too bad to be told. Our nerves must not be more tender than our consciences. Facts must be presented in their appalling reality, or the apathy of New-England, and the torture of our miserable fellow-men, will be eternal.

When this relation first reached Boston, the several papers containing it, were put into my hands, with a request to prepare for the Liberator, in the absence of its able editor, an account of the transaction. I therefore gave more than common attention to it. In reflecting upon it, I could not but be struck with the circumstance, that the information that seven human beings were on the point of perishing in a burning edifice and broad day, should have originated from without, and not a voice be heard from within! Why did not those lost wretches shriek, as the flames darted like serpents towards them ? There seemed to be but two modes of explaining the phenomenon. One was, that they welcomed death, even in this dreadful form ; the

other, that they were from habit and long experience impressed with the belief that cries would bring no help, but rather provoke new cruelties. Subsequently I saw a gentleman of our city, who was at New Orleans when this event occurred. He saw and conversed with some of the slaves, who survived, two of them having died very soon after their rescue. His verbal explanations cleared up several points, which the newspapers left obscure. Besides visiting the slaves at the city prison, (for it seems that no better place was provided for those innocent and suffering persons,) he went to the near neighbors, and inquired how it was that *they* did not hear and report, what had been so long going on over the way, or on the other side of the wall. They replied, that those slaves could not cry aloud, for their mouths were constantly kept wide open by iron instruments, which forced the tongue upwards to the roof of the mouth ; that, nevertheless, the poor creatures had been in the habit of sending forth at certain hours in the morning, when their mistress went her rounds, certain low moans—deep and sepulchral sounds of wo, which had driven the neighbors to retire regularly every day during five months to apartments the remotest possible from the place of these torments. And yet, during all that period, no complaint was laid before the public authorities, and no investigation made nor demanded ! My informant stated a further circumstance, which the public papers did not. One girl whom he saw, had on her bosom a deep impression of a flat-iron, as well defined as those which are seen upon an ironing-cloth ; she related, that her mistress, as a mode of torture, took a hot flat-iron from the fire, placed it upon her breast, and lashed it there with cords, until in that situation it cooled !

It was stated in one of the earliest accounts of these crimes, that the perpetrator was arrested, and would be brought to condign punishment. From the knowledge which I had of the slave codes, and of the customs of our slaveholding communities, I ventured to doubt, in the observations inserted in Liberator, the correctness of that statement ; and to predict that the murderess would not be punished ; and that the surviving slaves would one day be restored to her. I felt assured that an instance of impartial justice and adequate punishment

for a crime of this sort, would carry too much terror through a slaveholding community to be thought of for one moment, so long as slaveholders preside over the administration of the laws. The next mail brought news that the great criminal or her husband, had *not* been arrested; that no attempt had in fact been made to arrest them, though one of the chief criminal judges of the city was the principal witness of their fiendish and frantic barbarity; and that they had some difficulty in escaping from the city, being pursued, and nearly caught by the excited populace, who undoubtedly would have put them to death, if they could have laid hands on them. Fortunately for the culprits, the carriage in which they had ensconced themselves was mistaken, and rolled from New Orleans. Soon afterwards, the lady and her mate having openly traversed almost the entire length of the United States, safely embarked at New York for France. The firemen and spectators saw with pleasure, the house consumed, and a bonfire made of the elegant and costly furniture. The whole establishment being erased from the city, they proceeded to search the premises for proofs of other murders. They found several skeletons buried at a slight depth in the yard; they found several more 'in a condemned well;' so called, probably, because the Board of Health had ordered it to be shut up and discontinued. It may be readily supposed that the persons who prosecuted investigations, were not slaveholders. I am informed that they were exclusively laborers, mechanics and sailors. The masters, on the contrary, were alarmed and disgusted at the impertinent and dangerous curiosity, which they witnessed. Their love of order and the supremacy of the laws, dormant, while the innocent and the weak were the victims, became an active principle, when the strong and guilty were threatened. Cries issued from the crowd that other persons, who were named, treated their slaves as bad, and had made away with as many as Lalaurie. And a ready shout decided that they would proceed to investigate the new cases.

The magistrates, who could not arrest a couple of malefactors the day before, now bravely made head against a mighty and exasperated multitude. The sheriff read the riot act, and troops were assembled. But the brave and kind-hearted sailors, and the sturdy working-men, were not easily intimidated. For

some time the sheriff and the soldiers were unheeded, and it was not until a portion of the United States' army, together with the city legion—a sort of State standing army kept up in time of peace to keep down liberty—were paraded with loaded and levelled muskets, that they slowly retired. To complete the fulfilment of the prediction, an action has been commenced against the city by the agents of the murderess, to recover her slaves, and the value of her furniture and other property destroyed. There is little doubt that the suit will be successful.

I find a strong confirmation of the fact, that the cries of slaves, undergoing torture and barbarous violence, are not wont to attract attention, in a statement of one of the students of Lane Seminary, delivered during the late admirable discussion which occurred at that institution. He was, I think, from Alabama; born and brought up in a slaveholding family, and the heir of a slave inheritance. He stated, and repeated in the most deliberate and emphatic manner, that in the treatment of American slaves, '*cruelty* is the rule, *kindness* the exception.' It was so common to hear the cries of tortured slaves, that no attention was paid to them. Many other gentlemen of the Lane Seminary, being sons and heirs of slaveholders, have confirmed the same fact; and they fully concur in the opinion that 'CRUELTY IS THE RULE, AND KINDNESS THE EXCEPTION.'

From a great variety of impressive facts, testified on that occasion by native citizens of slaveholding states, I select one. It was related by a gentleman from Missouri.

A young woman, at all times very ill-treated, after receiving a more severe flogging than usual, ran away. In a few days, however, she returned and went to work in the field. 'At this time, the garment next to her skin was stiffened by contact with the wounds of former whippings. Towards night she told her master that she felt very sick, and could work no more. She crawled to the kitchen and laid herself down, exhausted. Her mistress asked what the matter was, but the girl did not answer. The question was repeated, and no answer returned. 'I'll see,' said the mistress, 'if I can't make you speak,' and she heated the tongs red-hot. The flat parts were applied in this state to the soles of her feet, but she uttered not a word. They were passed along her person from the feet to the face, and applied in

several places with no better success. At last the gentle operator seized with the tongs the girl's throat. And now she spoke, but it was only to whisper, '*Oh, Missa, don't; I'm most gone,*' and expired. The mistress lives now in the same place, and owns slaves.

An officer of the United States' army, who was in the expedition from fortress Munroe against the Southampton slaves in 1831, speaks with constant horror of the scenes, which he was compelled to witness. Those troops, agreeably to their orders, which were to exterminate the negroes, killed all that they met with, although they encountered neither resistance, nor show of resistance; and the first check given to this wide and barbarous slaughter grew out of the fact, that the law of Virginia, which provides for the payment to the master of the full value of an executed slave, was considered as not applying to the cases of slaves put to death without trial. In consequence of numerous representations to this effect, sent to the officer of the United States army commanding the expedition, the massacre was suspended.

In ordinary cases, the same motive of mercy does not exist. If a slave be convicted and executed, the master receives his value in money at the place of execution. So far, therefore, from having a pecuniary interest in giving protection and rendering justice to his helpless slaves, the very reverse is the truth.

It was suggested in a work published by a clergyman about eight years ago, that in case a master or any of his family committed a capital crime, the murder of a white for example, there was no difficulty in fixing the accusation upon any of his slaves, or upon any colored man; because, as the testimony of no colored man, bond or free, is admitted in any slave state, that of *one* white man must commonly be conclusive. A colored man might have been a hundred miles from the scene of the murder, surrounded by his family and friends, or by his fellow-servants, when the deed was done; and yet he would not be permitted to show it by the evidence of any number of colored persons, that is, of the only persons with whom, from the state of our society, he *could* have been, and by whom alone he could prove where he was. If one white man bear witness against him he must die; and his master, the sole witness against him, and per-

haps the veritable criminal, will receive a gratification of avarice under the same gallows, which quiets his fear. I have often thought that if the celebrated Mrs. Chapman had been a *slave*-owner, her paramour might have been now alive, and her reputation unstained.

There have been within my recollection, several cases of slaves burned alive. A discretionary power in justices of the peace, and three to five planters, to inflict that mode of death, exists in some of the States. No other civilized state in the world practises burning alive. Some nations may burn, but they extinguish life before the fire commences.

This single branch of slave law and practice, and this limited view of it, must suffice for the present occasion ; but I will state a few general heads, without detaining you with detailed proofs and illustrations, which it is much easier to collect than to relate.

Slave laws of this Republic forbid the master to allow his slave to acquire property, (even though the master be himself willing,) under severe pecuniary penalties.

Slave laws of this Republic in like manner forbid a master to manumit his slave under penalty of confiscation of the slave, and a fine upon the master of one hundred to one thousand dollars.

Slave laws of this Republic place impediments in the way of free colored men, unjustly held or reduced to slavery, asserting and proving their right to freedom ; it being a rule, that none in the actual condition of a slave can bring an action in his own name, and the laws making it hard to procure a white to do it, because the white without any interest, is liable to a fine, or to double costs, if the action fail. The judge and jury in such a case, (the only one in which a jury is allowed to a slave,) are all freeholders, i. e. slaveholders,—white laborers and leaseholders being disqualified, and even a slaveholder if he is a member of any emancipation society.

Slave laws of this Republic interdict any colored man from learning to set types and handle a press.

Slave laws of this Republic prescribe no limit to the punishments of whipping, chaining, beating, and starving.

Slave laws of this Republic leave the quantity and quality of food and clothing of the slave, at the will of the master. Some

states have affected to regulate these, and I will give you one specimen of the sincerity of these regulations. In South Carolina, if a slave be insufficiently fed or clothed, a *white* man may complain for him to a magistrate, and the magistrate may order suitable food and clothing, unless the master '*exculpate himself by his own oath*.' Why not let the magistrate have the slave before him, and judge by inspection whether the charge be well founded ? But no ; the master must judge after all, and he might as well decide the case at home, where in fact he has already done it, as before a justice of the peace. In Georgia, if a complaint be made by a *white* man, that a slave has insufficient sustenance and clothing, the judges of the inferior courts before whom the complaint is made, may sue the owner for such amount as is necessary for the relief of the slaves. No provision is made for costs ; so that the result is, that judges of one court may sue in another, at their own risk, to obtain necessary food and clothing for another man's slave, that man the adverse party, and not one of his slaves competent to give evidence how their fellow slave is clothed or fed !

Slave laws of this Republic interdict the light of knowledge and the consolations of religion, from two millions and a half of rational and immortal beings. They prohibit the alphabet, the bible, and any book or pamphlet whatsoever, not only to slaves, but also to all colored men, and the imparting of instruction in reading or writing, or of mental instruction in any form, or the loaning of any book, under penalties varying in different states from thirty-nine lashes, fifty dollars fine, and twelve months imprisonment, to five hundred dollars fine, perpetual imprisonment, or death. The Bible Society, if that respectable association should ever come to regard the poor oppressed and benighted slaves as men, (and they have on these very grounds a peculiar claim to christian benevolence and sympathy ; a claim which we hear urged all over the nation in favor of *foreign* colored men)—the Bible Society, I say, would be fined, whipped, sent to the penitentiary, or put to death ! And this is the system which men dare to assert, is sanctioned by the Bible.

The Bible says—'Thou shalt do *no* murder.' Does this sanction a system of murder ?

'If a man be found stealing his brother and maketh merchandize of him, then that thief shall die.' Does this authorize kidnapping?

'Thou shalt not compel thy brother to serve as a bond servant, but as a hired servant and sojourner shall he be with thee.' 'Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which of you is kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cry of them which reaped hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.' This I suppose is a commandment to keep slaves and defraud the laborer of his wages.

'Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which has escaped from him unto thee.' This appears to be a clear injunction to deliver up fugitive slaves to their masters.

'Woe to him who buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city with iniquity.' This is a manifest approval of the sacrifice of all the rights of the colored race, in forming the Federal Constitution; and affords a well founded hope of the perpetuity of that instrument.

'The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy, yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.' 'If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked of his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way, and turn him from it, if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.' 'If thou sayest, we *know* it not, doth not He who pondereth the heart consider it; and He that keepeth thy soul, doth He not know it?' These texts were no doubt designed to quiet the consciences of timid, time-serving ministers of the gospel, who *fear* to warn the wicked of his iniquity. Or who excuse themselves by *knowing* nothing about the matter. 'He that keepeth thy soul, doth He not know it?'

It has been said that the apostle Paul has sanctioned the relation of slave-master and slave, in the third and fourth of Colossians; and the reason usually assigned for this conclusion is, that the word rendered 'servant' in our English version, might with *equal* propriety be translated *slave*. Suppose it be so, the argument is as strong against as in favor of slavery, and I should think somewhat stronger, when we consider the whole spirit and

tendency of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament. But the proposition is not true ; the word used in the original Greek corresponds exactly to our word servant, which is a general term capable of embracing slaves, but commonly meaning those serving on contract for wages. The Greeks like ourselves had another word meaning *slaves*.

To test in a plain and common-sense way the correctness of this imputation upon Paul and his Master, let us translate the passage with its context, upon the hypothesis that the word should or *might* be translated *slave*.

'CHAP. 3—22. Slaves obey in all things slave-masters according to the flesh; not in eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in simplicity of heart, as fearers of God.

23. And whatever ye do, do it from the heart as to God, and not to men.

24. Knowing that from the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye are slaves to the Lord.'

'CHAP. 4.—1. Slave-masters, give to your slaves that which is just and equitable, knowing that you have a slave-master in Heaven.'

If this simple test has made you perceive the injustice done to the apostle, and to our religion, it has also made you perceive clearly the impiety, and, I had almost said, blasphemy of the authors of that injustice.

But, says the slaveholder and his parasites, how can you think of emancipating the slaves, when they will immediately turn and cut our throats, massacre our families, burn our houses, and rob us of every thing ? If such a fear really exist in any mind, it must be from the consciousness of having done that to the slaves, which would naturally provoke a dreadful retaliation—not from any experience that we have ever had of the moral character of colored men, or of any men. The colored race are proved by history, and by the concurrent opinions of writers both for and against them, to be singularly mild, hospitable, kind, and forgiving. Their enemies and calumniators admit this.

But the theory is absurd in respect to any human beings. It is injurious to man and dishonorable to his Maker.

If a man take with force his brothers' wages, wife and children ; if he scourge and incarcerate him, and sell them, this will make his brother peaceable, contented and grateful. But if a man restore to his brother, wages, wife and children, release him from prison, and heal his wounds, this will make his brother discontented and vindictive !

If a child be pinched and pricked by its nurse, it will be quiet or laugh; if it be tended kindly, it will cry. This is the theory, stripped of the unmeaning and delusive phraseology in which it is usually presented. Do good to a man, and he will hate you; do him evil, and he will love you!

I could state many instances, in which colored men—emancipated by their masters, and afterwards acquiring property, and their masters becoming poor and unfortunate—have maintained them; and oftentimes out of their daily earnings. An intelligent colored man of Boston, who has been in most of the slave territories of America, after relating to me a number of cases, exclaimed in conclusion, 'Cut their masters' throats?—They would kiss their feet.'

You have already been directed to the happy results, as far as we know, of the English experiments. There is one other to which I will advert for a moment, because it is constantly, sometimes ignorantly, often maliciously, misrepresented. I allude to the case of St. Domingo, which is a strong one in favor of immediate emancipation.

When the French National Assembly declared that 'all men are born free and equal, and have a right to continue so,' the mulatto slaves and freemen of St. Domingo, (for there were many of them free, the mulattoes having for many years previous to the French Revolution, followed the condition of their *fathers*, instead of their mothers,) requested in a quiet manner, a recognition of their freedom and civil equality, in conformity to the decree. The planters promised a compliance, and held a Convention in the Island, ostensibly to make arrangements for that purpose, but in reality to concert measures for putting down the mulattoes, and perpetuating slavery. They disregarded the spirit of the law, and broke their promise. The mulattoes flew to arms, and they were soon joined by the slaves generally. Then, indeed, commenced a bloody revolution. But our revolution was bloody, without as much justification for blood. Great revolutions are usually bloody, but on whom is the guilt? Doubtless on those who withhold from men their just rights—not on those who claim and vindicate them. It is the denial of rights that raises insurrections. It was not the granting, but the

withholding of emancipation, which deluged St. Domingo with blood.

The British invaded the island while the contest was still going on. The planters then proposed to the colored party, to make common cause to repel the English, in consideration of which, the masters would renounce their claims, and the freedom and persons of all should be henceforth held inviolable. The English evacuated the island in 1797 ; Toussaint was chosen Governor, and the island was prosperous and the people happy, until Buonaparte in 1802, sent out the cruel and perfidious expedition of Le Clerc, under the most fair and friendly pretences, but with secret orders to re-enslave or exterminate the colored race. Under these circumstances, a bloody war re-commenced, but the first and the worst examples of cruelty were exhibited by the whites. Thus it appears that the revolution of St. Domingo, in every stage of it, furnishes the most decisive proof of the dangers of slavery, and of the sound policy, and superior safety of immediate emancipation. If the planters had yielded their assent to the peaceable demand of liberty and equal rights, and had continued to conduct in the spirit of that assent, there is no reason to suppose that trouble would have ensued.

Lafayette was a man whose love of liberty was not a holiday phrase ; it was with him an active affection of the heart, not a cold and inoperative abstraction. Lafayette was consistent. Having bravely and disinterestedly aided in vindicating our rights, he did not incur the reproach of hypocrisy, by turning and trampling on the rights of others.

> 'T is the last key stone
> That makes the arch ; the rest that there were put
> Are nothing till that comes to bind and shut.
> Then stands it a triumphal mark ! Then men
> Observe the strength, the height, the why and when
> It was erected ; and still walking under,
> Find some new matter to look up and wonder.'

For the purpose of applying his principles to men of color, he purchased a plantation in the French Guiana. His first step was to collect all the whips and other instruments of torture and punishment, and make a bonfire of them, in presence of the assembled slaves. He then instituted a plan of giving a portion of their time to each slave every week, with a promise that as

soon as any one had earned money enough to purchase an additional day of the week, they should be entitled to it; and when with this increased time to work for themselves, they could purchase another day, they should have that, and so on, until they were masters of their whole time. In the then state of anti-slavery science, this gradual and sifting process was deemed necessary to form the character of slaves, and to secure the safety of the masters. Abolitionists would not elect this mode now. They would turn slaves at once into free laborers or leaseholders, on the same estate, if possible, where they have been as slaves. Still there is not an American abolitionist, who would not rejoice to see a *single* Southern planter copy the plan of Lafayette, or take any other step tending to emancipation, however remote. Before Lafayette's views were fully executed, the French revolution occurred, which interrupted his operations, and made the slaves free at once. But mark the conduct of the ungrateful and blood-thirsty blacks. While other slaves in the colony availed themselves of the first moment of freedom to quit the plantations of their masters, by whom they were generally ill-treated, Lafayette's remained, desiring to work for their humane and generous friend, until he should be indemnified for the expenses and sacrifices he had made in prosecuting his noble scheme.

But Lafayette is gone; gone too, when, perhaps, we needed his affectionate and moderating counsels the most. The great friend of our country is no more. He lies low—the pale and cold tenant of the grave. That eye, which intelligence kindled and benevolence tempered, is quenched in its sunken socket. Although Heaven, propitious to the prayers of nations, spared him beyond the ordinary course of nature, still we would gladly have held him back as a beloved guest, whose departure, though we know it necessary, pierces our hearts with grief. His head was serene as the clear heavens, his heart as beneficent as the beams of the sun. It passed the bounded continent, and cheered and blessed the people afar. Who shall catch his spotless mantle? When shall we see the like of Lafayette again?

Shade of the virtuous dead! Look down from thy bright abode, upon thy humble friends and followers. Entreat with the Enthroned Wisdom of the Heavens in behalf of those who

are suffering the wrong and outrage, with which the land is filled. Intercede with the Father of mercies, the God of all grace, hope, and consolation, that he would pity and save them; that he would touch with a living fire, from the altar of his love, the hearts of the people whom thou hast cherished; and make them burn with thine own sentiments of grief and shame, that this foul blot still remains deepening upon the escutcheon of our country. Welcomed of angels! desired of good men! too soon for us, and too late for thee, hast thou joined the spirits of just men made perfect in Heaven.

(Feb., 1891, 20,000)

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